

# TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

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## Outdoor Lighting Policy

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Approved by City Council - 9/30/97

### Code Sections and Design Guidelines:

Article 10-2.10 of the Site Development Ordinance outlines criteria for outdoor lighting. In particular, Section 10-2.1003 indicates that outdoor lighting should use “the minimum wattage lights which will safely illuminate the area” and that outdoor light sources “shall be shielded so as not to be directly visible from off-site.” Page 30 of the Design Guidelines suggests that exterior lights be carefully placed to prevent light from shining onto neighboring houses and that light sources must not be visible from off-site. The Zoning and Site Development Ordinances limit lighting within the setbacks to “driveway light fixtures, limited to one fixture on each side of a driveway, for a maximum of two (2) fixtures per lot,” but additional fixtures may be approved if necessary for safety.

### Intent:

The purpose of Code and Design Guideline provisions regarding outdoor lighting is to assure that the open and peaceful character of the Town is maintained, that adequate lighting is provided for the enjoyment of outdoor use areas, and that lighting does not intrude on the privacy of neighbors. The intent of this policy is to clarify more specifically the types and numbers of lighting fixtures that the Town feels are generally consistent with the Code provisions, but to allow flexibility for additional lighting when it is necessary for safety purposes or where it is not visible from off the site.

### Policy:

1. The number of lights on the exterior of a structure should be limited to providing for one light per doorway, with the exception of two lights at the main entrance, at double doors or garage doors, etc., and additional lights only where the Planning Director or Planning Commission determines they are needed for safety.
2. Pathway and driveway lighting should be restricted to low-height fixtures and should be spaced the maximum distance apart which will still provide for safe use. In order to avoid a “runway” appearance, it is recommended that lighting be placed on only one side of the driveway or walkway, or alternate from one side to the other. Recessed louvered lights are suggested for walkways and steps.

3. Generally, lighting fixtures should be shielded downlights for which the bulb is not visible from off site. Exceptions may be permitted in limited locations (entry, garage, etc.) or where the fixtures would not be visible from off site.
4. Downlighting from trees is acceptable if provided for safety or for outdoor use areas, where minimal in number, and where the bulb is not visible from off site.
5. Uplighting of trees is generally not allowed, unless it is clearly demonstrated that the number of such lights are minimal and the glow of the uplighting would not be visible from off site.
6. Spotlights should be limited in number, and directed away from clear view of neighbors. Shielding of spotlights with shrouds or louvers is suggested.
7. High intensity discharge lighting, such as mercury vapor, high and low pressure sodium, and metal halide lighting, is prohibited.
8. Lighting in setbacks is limited to two driveway light fixtures only, for the purpose of locating and identifying the site. No lights are allowed in side or rear yard setback areas, except where determined to be necessary for safety.
9. The Planning Commission and/or staff may allow lighting different than that outlined above when the proposed outdoor lighting is determined to be necessary to safely illuminate the area, or where the size of the property and/or extensive screening will assure that lighting glow and fixtures are not visible from off site.

## **Los Altos Hills Municipal Code**

### **Article 10 – Outdoor Lighting**

#### **Sec. 10-2.1001- Purpose**

The purposes of this article are: 1) to assure that outdoor lighting, both on the exterior of structures and along walkways, driveways, and landscape features, maintains the openness and quiet atmosphere of the Town and minimizes excessive use of energy; 2) to provide lighting for safety and adequate lighting for the enjoyment of outdoor use areas, such as around patios and pools; and 3) to prevent lighting which is intrusive and which imposes on the privacy and quiet enjoyment of neighboring properties.

#### **Sec. 10-2.1002- Recreation courts**

No artificial lighting shall be permitted for tennis and other recreation courts.

#### **Sec. 10-2.1003- Swimming pools and spas**

Artificial lighting of swimming pools and spas shall be permitted only under the following conditions:

- a. Lights are placed beneath the surface of the water in the pool or spa to illuminate the water.
- b. Other exterior lights used to illuminate the surrounding area use the minimum number and wattage of lighting which will safely illuminate the area.
- c. No direct light is cast beyond the immediate area of the pool or spa.

#### **Sec. 10-2.1004- High intensity lighting prohibited**

High intensity discharge lighting, such as mercury vapor, high and low pressure sodium, and metal halide lighting, is prohibited.

#### **Sec. 10-2.1005- Outdoor lighting--General**

Outdoor lighting should use the minimum number and wattage lights which will safely illuminate the area. Outdoor light sources shall be shielded so as not to be directly visible from off-site. No more than two (2) lights shall be allowed in setback areas (as defined in Chapter 2 (Zoning) of the Town of Los Altos Hills Municipal Code). Additional lighting may be permitted where it is determined to be necessary to safely illuminate the area.